

**REGULAR MEETING OF  
BELMONT REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**Tuesday, June 13, 2006**

**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, ONE TWIN PINES LANE**

**CALL TO ORDER 8:30 P.M.**

**ROLL CALL**

Directors Present: Dickenson, Lieberman, Warden, Feierbach, Mathewson

Directors Absent: None

Staff Present: Interim Executive Director Cassingham, Agency Attorney Zafferano, Community Development Director de Melo, Finance Director Fil, Agency Secretary Cook.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Approval of** Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 9, 2006.

**ACTION:** On a motion by Director Dickenson, seconded by Director Lieberman, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved by a show of hands.

**ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

**Status Report on Downtown Urban Planning/"Transforming El Camino Real" Project (Grand Boulevard)**

Community Development Director de Melo reviewed the proposed scope of the plan. He described the pedestrian crossing improvements at various intersections. He outlined the physical improvements to El Camino Real, including street trees, bulbouts, widened sidewalks, landscaping, and handicapped accessibility. He noted that the Planning Commission had reviewed the plan and provided suggestions for three areas, in order of preference: 1) improve the pedestrian crossing at El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue, 2) improvements on the west side of El Camino Real from O'Neill Avenue to Harbor Boulevard, and 3) improvements (also west side) from Ralston Avenue to Middle Road. He noted that the Commission approved the draft with those suggestions.

Community Development Director de Melo noted that the City would be seeking grant funding in order to begin implementation of improvements. He stated that the grant process is competitive, but that having a draft plan in place should help. The final plan is scheduled to be presented sometime in the Fall. He also noted that there is a potential for the addition of bike lanes.

In response to Director questions, Community Development Director de Melo confirmed that the redwood trees in the medians on El Camino Real would be preserved. He also clarified that the number of lanes on El Camino Real would not be reduced, but they may be narrower. He noted that there is a potential for the inclusion of bike lanes.

Director Feierbach suggested consideration for eliminating a left turn lane in order to create parking on both sides of Ralston Avenue west of El Camino Real.

Director Warden expressed concern regarding parking on El Camino Real at Harbor Boulevard. He noted that parking near the old city hall site on Fifth Avenue was currently being used. More parallel parking is needed. He recommended consideration for reinstalling the berm that was in place at one time along El Camino Real. He does not want to take away traffic lanes as noted by Director Feierbach.

Director Dickenson recommended consideration for eliminating parking after certain hours along Ralston Avenue during peak travel times.

Directors concurred to approve the second draft conceptual Master Plan, with additional comments as noted.

**Resolution Authorizing a Professional Services Agreement with the Belmont Chamber of Commerce to Perform Economic Development Business Retention Services**

Finance Director Fil stated that there were two contracts for service to consider for the Belmont Chamber of Commerce: one to amend the existing contract, and the second was for the next fiscal year. He reviewed the objectives of the contract and the recommendations for approval.

In response to Director questions, Finance Director Fil noted that most of the services contracted to be provided by the Chamber under the current contract were in process, and one was completed. The finished product creates an early warning regarding the local economy, especially regarding sales tax, and would have been helpful during the recent economic downturn. He also clarified that the language regarding the Chamber becoming independent "as early as administratively possible" was proposed to provide flexibility. He explained the 20 percent commission on the façade improvement program, and noted that the goal was the Chamber to facilitate the application process as a subcontractor. He noted that there are shortcomings to the program, since the loan amount is low.

**Maureen Freschet**, President, Belmont Chamber of Commerce, introduced members of the Chamber Board and the Interim Executive Director. She advised that the Chamber was currently recruiting for a new Director. She noted that the Chamber has been working with City staff regarding this contract, and it is committed to perform the services as outlined in the proposed contract. A strong economic development program is essential for the vitality of the City. She thanked the City for its commitment to business retention, recruitment, and economic development.

**Mary Morrissey-Parden**, Belmont Chamber of Commerce, noted that the Chamber's contract for services began in February of 2005, with amendments made in April of 2006. She noted that contract negotiations can take time to complete. There is a need to establish regular communications between the City and the Chamber. She noted that the work product (handbook) outlined in the scope of services would be available at an upcoming workshop scheduled on June 29<sup>th</sup>. She outlined the amount of money that the City has paid the Chamber to date for services rendered. She requested consideration for a three-year contract with a provision for renewal, and to include a termination clause. She requested clarification regarding the self-sufficiency clause. She noted that the proposed services contained in the contract are services that should be provided by the Chamber of Commerce.

In response to Director Feierbach's question regarding the monetary funding provided by the three-year contract, Ms. Morrissey-Parden clarified that renewable funding was requested for ongoing operations and services, and the collection and analysis of data. Increases are to be tied to the Consumer Price Index for three years.

Director Warden noted that prior to the current contract for service with the Chamber of Commerce, the City provided the Chamber with \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year for operations and services by way of a grant. He noted that the City no longer provides grants through its community group funding, and operating costs should not be paid through a contract for services. He stated that the Chamber of Commerce discussed a merger ten years prior. Costs are too high for a single Chamber, and he recommended that the Chamber consider self-sufficiency, or merge with an adjacent City's chamber, since the organization has struggled for many years. The City's contract should be for deliverables, not just keeping the office open, and the Chamber is not delivering. The Chamber is not financially supported by its membership, and continues to be dependent on the City for its operating costs. He does not support a \$70,000 contractual amount, and he desires to have these issues addressed over the next year.

Director Feierbach concurred, and made note of the low turnout to Chamber-sponsored events, and that there were problems with the holiday fundraising event.

Director Lieberman stated that the City needs a strong Chamber, and he is willing to provide funds to help. He noted the less-than-successful deliverables as promised in the contract, and that some deliverables, listed as accomplishments, are purely administrative functions. The City needs to work with the Chamber to be effective. He desires to have a results-oriented model. A merger may be beneficial. He recommends short-term funding and setting a deadline for addressing the other issues.

Director Dickenson recommended that Councilmembers sit as Chamber board members. He stated that a commission to the Chamber for the façade improvement program is not good use of public funds.

Chair Mathewson stated that it is critical that the Chamber of Commerce be self sufficient, and noted this has been talked about for a number of years. Chamber members are not receiving value and many are not renewing membership. He recognizes that the Chamber has had staffing issues, and many things have not been accomplished.

In response to Chair Mathewson, Ms. Morrissey-Parden explained that the Executive Director recruitment is in process, but there is no end date. She noted that the Chamber offers in-kind services that benefit the Redevelopment Agency. It is difficult to attract a new director without a budget. She suggested reviewing other cities' support to their chambers.

Director Dickenson suggested a continuance of this item to meet with the subcommittee, and to provide gap funding for the short term.

Director Warden responded that the committee has already met. The Chamber's overhead is too high and requires a permanent subsidy.

**ACTION:** Director Lieberman made a motion, seconded by Director Warden, to provide stub funding, provide \$12,000 data collection and analysis, \$12,000 for publication of the business directory, provide \$10,000 plus 20 percent commission for façade improvement processing for the current year, and to have two City Council members to work with the Chamber over the next two months to develop a plan for a model for the future of Chamber of Commerce.

Director Warden expressed concern regarding Councilmembers providing assistance for a future model, and noted that direction could be given instead.

Director Dickenson expressed support for consideration for providing one or more Councilmembers with a seat on the board. Director Lieberman stated he would consider adding this to his motion, if desired.

Director Feierbach expressed concern regarding the City providing funding while at the same time having a seat on the board. Director Dickenson responded that Councilmembers sit as members of Joint Powers Authority (JPA) boards to which funding has been provided. Director Feierbach stated that the Chamber is not a JPA, and those JPA agencies provide direct services to the community.

**ACTION:** On a substitute motion by Director Warden, seconded by Director Feierbach, Resolution 432 Authorizing a Professional Services Agreement with the Belmont Chamber of Commerce to Perform Economic Development business Retention Services was unanimously approved by a show of hands, said motion to include deferral of discussion on the remainder of the contract with the Chamber of Commerce to a special meeting to be held on June 27, 2006.

Director Lieberman commented that the Chamber of Commerce is the City's connection to the business community, and its vitality is important.

**Public Hearing - Adoption of FY 07 Budget**

Chair Mathewson opened the Hearing.

This item was continued to the Public Hearing for consideration during the Budget discussion of the Regular City Council meeting.

**RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING:**

**ACTION:** On motion by Director Warden, seconded by Director Dickenson, and approved unanimously by show of hands to adopt Resolution 433 Adopting the Proposed FY 2007 Revenue, Appropriations and Capital Improvement Program Budgets and Determining that Planning and Administrative Expenditures of Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund Monies are Necessary for the Production, Improvement, or Preservation of Low and Moderate Income Housing for the Belmont Redevelopment Agency.

**ADJOURNMENT** at this time, being 11:35 P.M.

Terri Cook  
Agency Secretary  
Meeting audio-recorded and videotaped  
Audio Recording 639

Minutes approved 7/11/2006